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Committee: Economic Matters

Testimony on: HB121 “Electric Companies – Regional Transmission Organizations – Report
(Utility Transparency and Accountability Act)”

Position: Support

Hearing Date: January 23, 2025

Valleys Planning Council, a non-profit that conserves land and resources, preserves historic character and maintains the rural feel and land uses in northwestern Baltimore County, urges a favorable report on HB121, which would require an electric company, other than a municipal electric utility, to submit a report to the Public Service Commission regarding each recorded vote cast by the electric company and any of its affiliates at a meeting of a regional transmission organization.

PJM is a regional transmission organization that manages the electric grid in Maryland, part or all of 12 other states and the District of Columbia, coordinating the movement of electricity through the high-voltage transmission lines in its service territory. It operates wholesale markets, buying electricity on behalf of utilities, and runs markets that determine the mix of energy sources used to power homes and businesses. PJM also creates rules regarding the operation of the transmission systems.

This bill requires a record of all PJM votes cast by electric companies to be submitted to the Public Service Commission. This information is currently private, so the PSC – and the public – has no way of knowing what their state-regulated electric companies are advocating for or against at PJM.

While decisions made at PJM significantly affect rates and our state’s ability to meet our climate goals, the decision making process is not transparent. By requiring a record of all votes cast by electric companies at PJM, the PSC will know what our electric companies are advocating for, or opposing, at this critical body. This legislation will ensure that the PSC and other policy makers have the information they need to regulate electric companies.

Requiring electric companies to report on recorded votes would provide additional needed transparency for votes on proposals that ultimately result in hundreds of millions of dollars in costs for utility customers. Valleys Planning Council urges a favorable report on HB121.

Respectfully,

Renée Hamidi, Executive Director

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